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Letter dated 12 March 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 12 March 2002, addressed to you by His Excellency Mr. Aytuğ Plümer, Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex would be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 62, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ümit **Pamir**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 12 March 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to refer to the letter dated 21 January 2002 (A/56/785-S/2002/100) from the Greek Cypriot representative to the United Nations addressed to you, which contains allegations of "violations of the airspace of the Republic" and "of the flight information region of Nicosia".

It will be recalled that similar allegations of so-called "airspace and flight information region violations" were refuted in our previous communications addressed to you, most recently in my letter dated 2 November 2001 (A/56/525-S/2001/1044). I wish to reiterate that flights within the sovereign airspace of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus take place with the full knowledge and consent of the appropriate authorities of the State, over which the Greek Cypriot administration in southern Cyprus has no jurisdiction or any right of say whatsoever. Furthermore, it should be emphasized that allegations of so-called violations of the flight information region or violations of air-traffic regulations are void and groundless under international law. Every precaution is being taken for the safety of navigation of civil air traffic during the activities of Turkish State aircraft within international airspace, within which the civil aviation authority of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is the only competent authority to provide air-traffic and aeronautical information services.

As stated in my previous letters, such allegations are based on the false and illegitimate claim that the sovereignty of the Greek Cypriot administration extends over the whole island, including the territory of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. This claim by the Greek Cypriot side is divorced from the existing realities in Cyprus, namely, the existence of two independent States, each exercising sovereignty and jurisdiction within their respective territories on the island.

It is important to note that at a time when direct talks are under way between the two States in Cyprus, on the basis of the agreement drafted by President Denktaş and Mr. Clerides on 4 December 2001, the Greek Cypriot administration is continuing, within the framework of the Greek-Greek Cypriot Joint Military Doctrine, its military build-up and activities in southern Cyprus. The Greek Cypriot daily newspaper, *Alithia*, dated 21 February 2002, reported that the Greek Cypriot Defence Minister, Mr. Hasikos, had made it clear that the Greek Cypriot side "would continue to arm irrespective of the process of direct talks between the two sides".

Recent rearmament activities of the Greek Cypriot administration have been widely reported in the Greek Cypriot press. Significantly, as disclosed by the Greek Cypriot daily *Simerini*, dated 28 January 2002, the Greek Cypriot administration has acquired Russian Mil Mi-35-type assault helicopters. According to the Greek Cypriot press, dated 30 January 2002, the Greek Cypriot Defence Minister revealed to the press that the assault helicopters had been deployed in the island around eight months earlier and that this was kept a secret at that time. Furthermore, the Greek Cypriot daily *Fileleftheros*, dated 17 February 2002, carried a report in its "Defence and Strategy" section about the BM-21 Grad-type multiple rocket launchers acquired recently by the Greek Cypriot side and reported that "these powerful

weapons will be used in a counter-attack against the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus".

In addition to the foregoing, the Greek Cypriot daily *Fileleftheros* of 15 January 2002 reported that the Greek Cypriot Defence Minister had confirmed press reports that the Greek Cypriot administration would be buying unmanned spy planes and armoured transport helicopters. The Greek Cypriot dailies, *Politis*, dated 21 November 2001, and *Mahi*, dated 2 December 2001, both reported that the Greek Cypriot administration would acquire assault speed boats and upgrade its air and ground combat capabilities through the modernization of its anti-tank weapons with GTT-106 artillery units and state-of-the-art ballistic computer systems. Reportedly, Othellos-type anti-aircraft systems would be upgraded with Aspide missiles and Russian T-80 tanks, VAB-type vehicles (which have already been equipped with HOK missiles) and BMP-3-type armoured vehicles would be further equipped with thermal cameras. The Greek Cypriot daily, *Cyprus Mail*, dated 1 December 2001, reported that the Greek Cypriot administration also included in this year's defence budget the necessary funds for the purchase of advanced coastal radar systems as well as additional combat helicopters. It was also reported by the Greek Cypriot press on 24 February 2002 that Greece would be donating two French-made destroyers to the Greek Cypriot administration.

As part of its provocative military activities, the Greek Cypriot administration carried out, in early February, the "Olympos 2002" planned military command exercise, which was conducted simultaneously with the "Alexandros 2002" military exercise by Greece. Both exercises were carried out within the framework of the Joint Military Doctrine and have included, once again, provocative scenarios such as "liberating the North".

The Greek Cypriot administration, which ostensibly supports the demilitarization of the island and calls for the withdrawal of all "foreign troops", is not only acquiring offensive weapons but is also expanding its army by enabling even more Greek nationals to join the Greek Cypriot National Guard. The Greek Cypriot daily *Fileleftheros*, dated 11 December 2001, reported that the Greek Cypriot administration was currently recruiting more professional soldiers from southern Cyprus as well as from Greece in accordance with the Joint Military Doctrine. The same newspaper, dated 24 November 2001, also refers to an announcement by the Greek Cypriot Defence Minister that legislation enabling women to do voluntary military service had been prepared and would be presented to the Greek Cypriot House of Representatives.

My Government believes that, at this crucial stage, all sides should refrain from taking any action which would hamper the prospects of achieving progress through the current phase of direct talks. We hope that the Greek Cypriot administration will abandon its adventurous stance. We hope that it will adopt a constructive approach which will enable us to make progress towards a comprehensive settlement between the two States. We believe that it is the duty of the international community to urge the Greek Cypriot administration to cease all hostile and provocative activities and concentrate its efforts on reaching a peaceful settlement.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 62, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Aytuğ **Plümer**
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus